

drought package that will allow many family farmers and ranchers to stay in business through this extensive drought.

Over 23 groups expressed their support for the disaster assistance provisions in the Homeland Security funding bill for fiscal year 2005 at the beginning of this week, including the National Farmers Union, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, and National Association of Wheat Growers, to name a few. Such wide and strong support not only speaks to the number of producers who require assistance, but also to the merit of the provisions accepted in the Senate bill.

Drought is a real disaster and we must treat it as such. I am hopeful that my colleagues in the House realize how important this issue is for our agricultural producers, who are the economic engines of our rural communities and the backbone of our Nation. The Senate passed agricultural disaster assistance in a broad bipartisan manner, and I am hopeful that the House will show their support for America's producers by ensuring agricultural assistance remains at the levels authorized in the Senate bill.

SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina. Mr. President, I rise in recognition of October as Spina Bifida Awareness Month.

Spina bifida is the Nation's most common, permanently disabling birth defect. It is a neural tube defect that occurs when the central nervous system does not properly close during the early stages of pregnancy. Each year more than 4,000 pregnancies are affected and of these 1,500 babies are born with spina bifida. The most severe form of spina bifida occurs in 96 percent of children born with this disease. However, thanks to the good work that the Spina Bifida Association of America is carrying out to promote prevention and to enhance the lives of all affected by this condition, substantial progress is being made.

During Spina Bifida Awareness Month, a special effort is made to increase public awareness about spina bifida and its prevention. Simply by taking a daily dose of the B vitamin, folic acid, women of childbearing age have the power to reduce the incidence of spina bifida by up to 75 percent. Recent studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, show that 40 percent of women of childbearing age now report taking a vitamin containing folic acid every day. In addition, since the Food and Drug Administration, FDA, decision to fortify enriched grains with folic acid, CDC has documented a 26 percent decline in these birth defects. These simple changes that produce profound effects clearly demonstrate the importance of awareness.

In addition to educating the public about spina bifida, the Spina Bifida As-

sociation of America also addresses the needs of the spina bifida community. Founded in 1973, the association is the only national organization solely dedicated to advocating on behalf of the spina bifida community. Today, there are approximately 60 chapters serving over 125 communities nationwide.

I am honored to support the Spina Bifida Association and wish to commend them for all of their hard work to prevent and reduce suffering from this birth defect. I greatly appreciate their efforts to improve the lives of those 70,000 individuals living with spina bifida throughout our country. I wish the Spina Bifida Association of America the best of luck in its endeavors and urge all of my colleagues to support the association's efforts.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

KARA SHERIDAN

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Miss Kara Sheridan, the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl White of Ludlowe, KY. Miss Sheridan is a most extraordinary young lady. As I speak, Miss Sheridan is representing the United States of America at the 2004 Paralympic Games. The Paralympic Games are the biggest competition in the world for athletes with a disability.

Miss Sheridan earned the honor of competing in the paralympics through hard work, perseverance and a spirit of hope. I believe that it is these three virtues which have also earned her a right to a place of honor here on the Senate floor and in the hearts of her countrymen. She has risen above the challenges posed by osteogenesis imperfecta, a rare genetic condition that she was born with, and showed the world that perseverance and hope will always be rewarded.

Kara's achievements have come in many different forms throughout the years. They include graduating from Wright State University magna cum laude last year, participating in competitive swimming events, serving on committees through the National Youth with Disabilities Council, and being awarded a scholarship to work on her master's degree from the University of Miami. But the greatest honor that Kara has earned is the accomplishment of a hope so great that it seems nothing can deter her.

Miss Sheridan has shown to America and to the world what it looks like to habitually do the right thing by hoping. Thanks to Miss Sheridan, we have already been reminded of that.●

IN REMEMBRANCE OF COLEEN JARVIS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is my honor to speak in memory of the late Coleen Jarvis, Vice Mayor of the City of Chico and strong advocate for women, children, and the less fortu-

nate. She will always be remembered for her love of family, politics and the people whom she served so ably.

Coleen Jarvis dedicated her time and energy to improving her community. She fought to improve conditions for women, children, and the homeless. Coleen served as coordinate for the local rape crisis center and worked at Legal Services of Northern California, giving legal aid to those in need. "The community of Chico lost a resourceful, energetic, dedicated and smart leader in the too-soon death of Council Member Coleen Jarvis," said Butte County Supervisor Jane Doaln. "I first met Coleen when she worked on behalf of victims of rape and we continued our friendship and shared work on behalf of our loved community in many venues. Coleen had a deep commitment and worked very hard to improve our community and to remind us of our rightful duty to recognize and resolve the needs of the poor. We all were better representatives due to her efforts. She is sorely missed."

Coleen became an important community leader through her hard work. She was elected to the Chico City Council in 1966, and served almost 8 years. As a council member, she continued to fight for her progressive values. She was passionate about the issues and people she held dear. She was known by her colleagues and friends as a giving person who possessed great integrity, drive, intellect, and wit with an energy and spirit that drove her to fight for what she believed in. Chico Mayor Maureen Kirk reflected, "Coleen was a public servant full of integrity, passion, commitment, empathy, inclusion, tolerance, and intelligence. Her legacy is the Torres Community Homeless Shelter, the first step in her quest to find a solution for homelessness. Coleen will be sorely missed. In her 46 years, she accomplished more than 99 percent of us would accomplish in twice as many years.

Coleen Jarvis committed her life to her family and the world around her. She touched the lives of many, and her impact on her community will be long remembered.●

POLISH DAILY NEWS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

• Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I congratulate the Polish Daily News, Inc., which celebrates its 100th anniversary of publishing the Polish Weekly. On Saturday, October 2, 2004 the Polish community will celebrate this milestone at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy. The Polish Weekly is a wonderful resource for the Polish-American community, providing a wealth of information on local issues as well as news from Poland.

Poles are the second largest immigrant ethnic group in Michigan. They have thrived in communities throughout our State and continue to maintain a strong connection to their rich heritage. Polish immigrants established

themselves throughout Michigan in great numbers towards the end of the 19th century. In the pursuit of a better life for themselves and their families, they settled in Polonias, or Polish neighborhoods. Many arrived in search of job opportunities in our great automotive industry. By 1904, Polish Americans were the largest and one of the most influential ethnic groups in Detroit. By 1920, they made up nearly one-fifth of Detroit's population. Polish people have enriched Michigan's culture and made metro Detroit a better place to live.

There were many institutions important to this growing immigrant population including cultural organizations, churches and the Polish American press. The Polish Daily News has played a significant role in this history, devoting itself to sustaining Polish culture and language and connecting the immigrant community to the political, cultural and social life of America.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to congratulate the Polish Daily News on reaching this significant 100-year milestone. Gratulacje!

MS. TAMARA BRICKMAN

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a special individual who has been serving the great State of Oregon for years. Tamara Brickman, a legislative coordinator at the Oregon Employment Department, is devoted to improving the lives of Oregonians by increasing the efficiency of the State government and improving the quality of workforce training. Her knowledge of State and Federal labor laws is expansive and impressive. My staff and I rely on her expertise frequently when addressing workforce legislation in Congress.

Ms. Brickman is a native Oregonian, the fourth generation of her family to live in a small town named La Grande, not far from my hometown of Pendleton in the northeast corner of the State. She is a graduate of Eastern Oregon University and a former intern of my esteemed predecessor in the Senate, Senator Mark Hatfield. According to Ms. Brickman, it was in Senator Hatfield's office that her true passion for public service blossomed.

Ms. Brickman began her career working for Oregonians as a teacher in La Grande at an alternative high school and a job training facility for individuals receiving public assistance. In January 1993, Ms. Brickman took a job in the Senate Ethics, Elections, and Campaign Finance Reform Committee of the Oregon State Legislature. In fact, Ms. Brickman served as a staffer in the Oregon Capitol when I carried my first bill on the Senate floor as an Oregon State Senator.

Before heading to law school at the University of Oregon, Ms. Brickman furthered her strong reputation in workforce training by running a federally-funded youth summer employment

training program in Union County in 1994 and 1995. The training program was part of the Job Training Partnership Act, JTPA, now known as the Workforce Investment Act. Ms. Brickman taught disadvantaged youth in job skills and then found community job placements for those students in local businesses.

After passing the Oregon State bar in 1998, Ms. Brickman held a range of legislative positions for a State senator, member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Oregon University System Chancellor's office. For the last 3 years, Ms. Brickman has gone above and beyond the call of duty at the Oregon Employment Department to help members of our congressional delegation pass unemployment extension benefits and fiscal state relief. Ms. Brickman never fails to share important information about the state of the workforce in ways that allow me to craft timely legislation that responds to our State's needs. Her commitment to Oregon's workers and families shines through in her outstanding work.

There are thousands of dedicated State and local government employees across the country who serve their communities with the highest distinction. In my opinion, few could match the professionalism of Ms. Brickman. It is my honor and pleasure to take the time today to recognize Ms. Tamara Brickman for her dedication to Oregon.

BALLOON FIESTA—CHARACTER COUNTS

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I would like to discuss the good that occurs when a community joins together. This relates to a wonderful program I have been proud to promote in New Mexico for the past 10 years—Character Counts—and the support it gets from the business community.

We have had troubling and disappointing news over the past few years about corporate scandals and questionable ethics in the corporate world. So it is with great pleasure to be able to discuss a story about responsible and caring business behavior.

For the fourth straight year, Northrup Grumman has teamed with other local organizations to help at-risk youth experience the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

On October 7 through 8, eight elementary-age students in the Character Counts education program run through the Albuquerque YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Albuquerque and Rio Rancho will be treated to a field trip to the Balloon Fiesta courtesy of the Northrup Grumman and its partners—Meals on Wheels and the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta organization. The children and their chaperones will be treated to tethered balloon rides and generally feted throughout the day as special guests.

Now, this is more than just a simple do-good action by a major corporation.

For these children it is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure linked to the Character Counts education program that builds into their lives the benefits of Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Citizenship, Fairness, and Caring. These are the six pillars of good character.

The Balloon Fiesta outing is a joint effort by these companies and organizations with the Albuquerque Character Counts Cooperative. We know these trips impact these children's lives. It is not only a reward for excelling at Character Counts, but also an entertaining way for them to broaden their horizons, meet community leaders and have a ballooning experience they might not have otherwise ever experienced.

Character Counts is an incredibly successful character education initiative. We are celebrating its 10-year history in New Mexico and these annual balloon fiesta field trips for outstanding students are a key component to helping youth become inspired by adults who are role models of the Character Counts pillars.

So I express my appreciation to the team of businesses and groups who have helped make the overall Character Counts program a success in New Mexico. In particular, I am pleased with Northrup Grumman, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs, Meals on Wheels and Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta for broadening the horizons for children.

CONGRATULATING MARGARET (PEG) CURTIN

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I wish a happy 70th birthday to an outstanding citizen and dear friend, Peg Curtin.

Peg was one of my earliest and strongest supporters when I first ran for Congress in 1974. Peg's family and mine have been close since the 1950s, when my father served in the House and then in the U.S. Senate.

For nearly three decades, Peg has compiled an outstanding record of public and community service in Connecticut. She has truly given her heart and soul to the people of our State.

From 1974 to 1977, Peg was a union organizer for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees and a member of the international staff of the AFL-CIO. In 1975, she was part of the transition team of one of our State's most beloved Governors, the late Ella T. Grasso. That year, Peg also began the first of 4 years as a member of the New London City Council, including one year as the city's mayor. Among her many accomplishments was the development and implementation of New London's first-ever affirmative action plan.

From 1979 to 1996, Peg devoted her time and energy to the State of Connecticut. For 12 years, she served as under secretary at the Office of Policy and Management's Division of Intergovernmental Relations. There, her talents enabled her to handle a demanding and diverse array of tasks,